



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Eugene District Office

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IN REPLY REFER TO:

1792A

EA-00-12

Wendling Progeny

June 13, 2000

Concerned Citizen,

The McKenzie Resource Area of the Eugene District Bureau of Land Management has completed the Environmental Assessment for a proposal to establish a 14-acre progeny test site on a portion of a regeneration harvest area located in Section 11, T. 16 S., R. 1 W., Will. Mer.

You have expressed an interest in receiving copies of Environmental Assessments for district projects. Enclosed is a copy of the Environmental Assessment for your review and any comments. Public notice of this action will be published in the Eugene Register Guard on June 14, 2000. The public comment period will end on June 29, 2000. If you have any questions concerning this proposal, please feel free to call Rich Kelly at 683-6405.

Comments, including names and street addresses of respondents, will be available for public review at the district office, 2890 Chad Drive, Eugene, Oregon during regular business hours (7:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.), Monday through Friday, except holidays, and may be published as part of the EA or other related documents. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name or street address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your written comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations or businesses and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

Sincerely,

Emily Rice, Field Manager

McKenzie Resource Area

Environmental Assessment
for
Wendling Progeny Test Site Establishment
OR 090-EA-00-12

**UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
EUGENE DISTRICT OFFICE**

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT NO. OR 090-EA-00-12
Wendling Progeny Test Site Establishment**

I. INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE AND NEED

This action proposes establishment of a 14-acre progeny test site in the McKenzie Resource Area of the BLM Eugene District. The Wendling Progeny Test Site would be established on a portion of a regeneration harvest area located in Section 11, Township 16 South, Range 1 West, Willamette Meridian, Lane County, Oregon. The Proposed Action is located in the General Forest Management Area (Matrix) Land Use Allocation. The Proposed Action would be implemented in fiscal years 2000 and 2001.

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to establish a progeny test site as part of a cooperative tree improvement program for the Northern Oregon Cascades Tree Improvement Program. The test site is one of six sites being established under a cooperative tree improvement agreement. The need for the action is established in the *Eugene District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan*, June 1995, (RMP ROD). See *Appendix M, Forest Genetics Program*, for an explanation of program objectives and program direction. The fourth objective - tree improvement programs, which emphasize cooperative efforts for operational programs, applies to this project. Progeny test sites are part of an applied genetics research project. The test sites are established to evaluate selected families, and are expected to continue for 40-50 years. Measurements of growth and other characteristics would be completed on the trees.

B. CONFORMANCE WITH LAND USE PLAN

The Proposed Action is in conformance with the *Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl*, and the *Eugene District Resource Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement*. Additional information on the objectives of the tree improvement program is detailed in the *RMP ROD, Appendix M - Forest Genetic Program*, in *An Updated Tree Improvement Plan For Western Oregon* (1987), and in the *Eugene District Tree Improvement Plan* (1994). The above referenced documents are available for review at the Eugene District Office.

C. ISSUES

Issues Not Analyzed In Further Detail

1. T & E plants and Special Status plants will not be analyzed in this assessment. Plant surveys were completed for T & E plant and Special Status plant species prior to the regeneration harvest. No species were found.
2. Survey and Manage species issues will not be analyzed in this assessment. The Wendling Timber Sale unit is a recently disturbed site. Due to the removal of the overstory trees and site preparation it is not suitable habitat for Survey and Manage bryophytes, lichens, fungi, red tree voles, or mollusk species.
3. T & E terrestrial wildlife species will not be analyzed in this assessment. There is no suitable habitat within or adjacent to the project area for the Northern spotted owl, lynx or bald eagle.

Issues Selected For Analysis

1. What are the impacts to successful reforestation of the area due to establishment of a progeny test site?
2. What are the impacts to green tree retention and accumulation of down woody debris as a result of the establishment of a progeny test site?

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

The Proposed Action and Alternatives consider progeny test site establishment on one project area of approximately 14 acres (see map in the appendix).

A. PROPOSED ACTION - Progeny Tests Site Establishment

This alternative is designed to establish a progeny test site on a recent regeneration harvest area. The Wendling Timber Sale (OR090-TS96-279) was sold in 1996 and logged in 1997. An Environmental Assessment for the Wendling Timber Sale was completed in 1995 (EA-95-23).

Silviculture

The project area is 14 acres within a 119-acre regeneration harvest area. The unit was planted with 2 year-old Douglas-fir seedlings in winter 1997/98 following the regeneration harvest. A snag creation project was completed in 1998.

The proposed progeny test site would be on the south side of Road No. 16-1-11. The project area would be site prepared with an excavator in summer 2000. Woody vegetation would be uprooted to reduce competition and facilitate test site layout and planting. A fence would be constructed in fall 2000, to protect the test seedlings from big game browse damage. The planting spots for the test seedlings are laid out on a square grid (9 by 9 foot spacing). The 1 year-old test seedlings would be planted in designated spots. Eight acres would be planted in winter

2000/01, and the remaining 6 acres would be planted in winter 2002/03.

The site would have regular vegetation maintenance treatments in years 1 to 10 to control competing vegetation and maintain uniform growing conditions. The environmental conditions on the site are maintained as uniform as possible so the genetic differences between the trees are expressed and can be measured. Growth measurements would be collected periodically and the data from the sites would be analyzed and used in the tree improvement program.

Background Information

In 1981 the BLM Eugene District established thirteen progeny test sites as part of the McKenzie Tree Improvement Program. These first generation sites are now 20 years old. In 1998 the Northern Oregon Cascades Tree Improvement Cooperative (NOCTIC) was initiated. NOCTIC is part of a regional tree genetics program for improvement of Douglas-fir. Cooperators included BLM, Oregon Dept. Forestry, Avery Interests, Willamette Industries, Cascade Consulting Inc., and the Campbell Group. A Memo Of Understanding for the cooperative program was signed in January 1999. The NOCTIC program is based on a peer reviewed study plan developed by the Northwest Tree Improvement Cooperative, the regional organization for all tree improvement cooperatives in the Pacific Northwest. The Wendling Progeny Tests Site is one of six progeny test sites proposed for NOCTIC. The test sites would be established on cooperator lands.

Design Features For The Proposed Action

1. The site preparation equipment would be cleaned prior to its arrival on Bureau of Land Management Land in order to slow the spread of noxious weeds.
2. All snags and green trees would be retained on the project area.
3. Logging slash and down woody material would be displaced around the perimeter of the site to clear a strip for fence construction.
4. An excavator would be utilized to complete a site preparation treatment. The excavator will operate during periods of low soil moisture (generally less than 30% soil moisture). The number of excavator passes over the same area would be minimized to reduce compaction.
5. Unmerchantable tree tops and limbs would be piled or scattered across the site to contribute organic matter and improve soil productivity, and provide wildlife habitat. At least 10% of the piles would be retained for wildlife habitat.
6. The crowns on the standing green trees would be thinned by pruning approximately one third of the live limbs on trees with large crowns. The purpose is to open the crowns which will reduce the pressure from wind and reduce the number of trees which are blown down.

7. Existing conifer tree seedlings would be retained in areas which are not utilized for the progeny test site.

B. ALTERNATIVE 1 - No Action

No activities described under the Proposed Action would occur.

C. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT NOT ANALYZED IN DETAIL

Ten units were considered as candidates for establishment of a progeny test site. These units are new and recently planted regeneration harvest areas. Each unit was reviewed in the field and evaluated based on the following criteria and rating:

<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Rating</u>
Road access	Good, Okay, Poor
Travel time	Time In Minutes
Slope and site uniformity	Good, Poor
Present veg cover	Cost For Site Prep
Projected veg maintenance costs	High, Medium, Low
Projected fence construction	High, Medium, Low
Frost pockets/wetlands	Present, Absent
Noxious weeds	Present, Absent
Visibility to public/vandalism threat	High, Medium, Low
Comments	Other Comments

The Wendling unit was selected as the preferred area for the proposed progeny test site because it has good access, favorable travel time, high site uniformity, low vegetation competition, and low fencing costs. It will be the only site analyzed in this assessment.

III. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The project area is in the Mohawk River Watershed in the Willamette Province. The *Mohawk/McGowan Watershed Analysis* was completed in May 1995. The plants and animals in the project area do not differ significantly from those discussed in the Eugene District *Proposed Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement, November 1994*, (RMP EIS), Chapter 3.

See Chapter 2, General Description Of Mohawk/McGowan Watershed, and Chapter 4, Past and Current Conditions, in the *Mohawk/McGowan Watershed Analysis* for a description of the watershed. The Mohawk/McGowan basin covers approximately 87,887 acres. Most of the watershed is forest industry or BLM administered land. The forest industry land is 52.1%, BLM land is 25.9%, private land is 20.3%, and other government land is .3%. The land use allocations for the BLM administered land are: LSR 1%, Connectivity 9%, General Forest Management 52%, and Riparian Reserve 37%.

Vegetation

The project area is located in a Matrix Land Use Allocation. The area is 14 acres, located at an elevation of 1000 feet. The current vegetation is 3 year-old Douglas-fir trees and mixed brush and shrub species. There are standing green trees across the project area. Section 11 surrounding the project area includes second-growth stands of Douglas-fir and hardwoods 60 to 70 years of age. There is an oak woodland/dry meadow south of the proposed test site location.

Wildlife

Standing green trees (8 trees per acre) were retained during the regeneration harvest. One to two green trees per acre were topped in 1998 to create snags. Approximately 4 green trees per acre have blown down and currently exist as down wood on the project area. Approximately 4 trees per acre currently exist as standing trees.

The proposed project area is not suitable habitat for red tree vole, any Survey and Manage mollusks, bald eagle, lynx or Northern spotted owl. There is no suitable spotted owl or bald eagle habitat within 0.25 mile of the proposed project area that could be affected by disturbance from the Proposed Action.

Botany

Scotch Broom (*Cytisus scoparius*) and St. Johnswort (*Hypericum perforatum*) are present on the project area, in adjacent areas, and along the roads leading to the project area.

Soils

The dominant soil in the project area is the Honeygrove series. This deep soil formed in mixed materials (siltstone, tuff and basalt) on broad stable ridges, in saddles, and on toe slopes that receive more than 60 inches of rain annually. Topography is gentle with slopes from 0 to 5%. The surface layer is a silty clay loam about 9 inches thick underlain by about 50 inches of heavy clay. Coarse content is lacking in the upper portions but can be as much as 15% in the lower part. Ritner, Kilchis, Philomath, and Cumley soil series are also present.

Productivity of the Honeygrove soil is moderate to high (5-8% organic matter). On the basis of a 100-year site curve, the mean site index for Douglas-fir on these soils is 165. Honeygrove and the associated soils are fairly common in Lane County, making up 17% of the survey area (SCS Lane County Soil Survey, 1987). These soils occur in both the Coast and Cascade Ranges, but are more prevalent on the east side of the Eugene District.

The existing roads are gravel surfaced that get only occasional use. A dirt spur road exists on the south and east side of the project area (16-1-11.3). The dirt spur was utilized when the area was harvested in 1997, and was decommissioned following harvest operations. The road is currently blocked with a dirt berm near the junction with Road No. 16-1-11. This road would not be utilized for the Proposed Action.

Water and Fisheries

There are no intermittent or perennial streams or wetlands within or adjacent to the boundaries of the project area.

Visual

The project area is classified as Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class IV, which allows major modifications of existing character of the landscapes.

Cultural

A cultural resource survey of the project area was completed prior to the timber sale. There are no cultural resources within the area.

Air

Burning of piles of logging slash and other woody vegetation is planned.

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

A. UNAFFECTED RESOURCES

The following critical elements of the human environment either are not present or would be unaffected by the Proposed Action or Alternatives: Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, prime or unique farm lands, flood plains, Native American religious concerns, solid or hazardous wastes, Wild and Scenic Rivers, wilderness, minority populations, and low income populations.

B. DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

The Proposed Action would establish a progeny test site. Site preparation would be completed in 2000 and tree planting in 2001. The site would be fenced to protect the test trees from big game browse damage. The fence would be dismantled in 10 to 15 years after the trees have exceeded 15 feet in height. Establishment of the progeny test site would continue BLM involvement in cooperative tree programs, a beneficial partnership between Federal and private land managers.

Vegetation

Site preparation would be completed in summer 2000 to uproot brush shrubs and small trees. The Proposed Action would remove the existing tree seedlings and result in new 1 year-old trees being planted in winter 2000/2001. The establishment of conifer trees on the project area would be set back approximately 3 years. The Proposed Action would not impact successful reforestation of the area. The progeny test site would be fenced to protect the tree seedlings from big game browse damage. Protection from browse damage would accelerate the growth of the tree seedlings.

Wildlife

The proposed action would have no negative direct or indirect effect on any wildlife species of concern because the area does not provide suitable habitat for these species. All down logs, snags and green trees would be retained on the site. Down logs could be moved in order to

construct the fence, but would still be available to wildlife species now and into the future. At least 10% of piles created by green tree pruning would be left on site to provide habitat for a variety of small vertebrate and invertebrate species. Pruning of green trees would improve the likelihood of retaining these trees in the future. These trees would provide large legacy trees that would likely be utilized by a variety of wildlife species as the stand matures.

Botany

The Proposed Action would reduce the Scotch Broom from the project area. This would have little overall effect on the amount of Scotch Broom in the vicinity since the project area is very small in comparison to the number of acres impacted by Scotch Broom.

Soils

Some minor compaction of surface soils would result from excavator site preparation. The design features detailed in Section II-A will serve to minimize impacts to soils and keep the extent of soil compaction to within District standards (Eugene RMP ROD, Page 37). Generally, compaction less than 2 inches deep will be reduced by annual weathering.

Some localized displacement of the soil organic layer could also occur from site preparation. However, this level of site manipulation would not reduce nutrient capital, inherent physical and chemical capabilities, or natural rates of erosion.

Water and Fisheries

The Proposed Action would have no impacts to water quality and fish habitat, and would have no impacts to Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives.

Visual

There would be no impacts to visual resources by the Proposed Action.

Cultural

No cultural resources would be adversely affected by the Proposed Action.

Air

The Proposed Action would have a slight affect on air quality. The impacts from dust from site preparation operations would be short term and minimal. The impacts from smoke from pile burning would be short term and minimal.

C. DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF ALTERNATIVE 1 (NO ACTION)

Vegetation and Wildlife

Alternative 1 would allow current trends in stand development to continue. The existing conifer tree seedlings would continue to grow. The conifer tree seedlings would likely continue to experience deer browse damage. Some additional blow down of standing green trees would likely occur.

Other Effects

Alternative 1 would have no effect on botanical resources, would not alter existing soil conditions, would have no effect on water resources or fisheries resources, would have no effect on visual resources, would have no effect on cultural resources, and would have no effect on air quality.

D. CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

This analysis incorporates by reference the analysis of cumulative effects in the *USDA Forest Service and USDI Bureau of Land Management Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement on Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and Old-Growth Forest Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl*, (February 1994), (NSO FSEIS) Chapter 3 & 4 and the RMP EIS Chapter 4. Those documents analyze most cumulative effects of timber harvest and other related management activities. None of the alternatives analyzed here would have cumulative effects on resources beyond those effects analyzed in the above documents. The following section supplements these analyses, providing site-specific information and analysis particular to the alternatives considered here.

The Proposed Action would result in establishment of a progeny test site for the Eugene District tree genetics program. The area would be successful reforestation and there would be no long term impacts to accumulation of down woody debris.

Cumulative effects to Riparian Reserves would be negligible.

Cumulative effects to soil resources would be negligible. No persistent detrimental compaction would result and there would be no effects to long term productivity.

Alternative 1 would result in continuation of the present conditions. Additional green tree blow down would be likely. Additional deer browse damage to tree seedlings would be expected to occur until the tree reach 8 feet in height (approximate 5 years).

V. CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

A. LIST OF PREPARERS

The Proposed Action and Alternatives were analyzed by the following BLM specialists:

Paula Larson	Wildlife
Rudy Wiedenbeck	Soils
Trish Wilson	Environmental Coordinator
Fred Kallien	Silviculture
Cheshire Mayrsohn	Botany
Dave Reed	Fuels
Rich Kelly	Genetics

B. AGENCIES, GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS CONSULTED

This EA will be mailed to the following individuals and organizations:

John Bianco	Peter Saraceno
Oregon DEQ	Harold Schroeder
Jim Goodpasture	Sierra Club - Many Rivers Group
Pam Hewitt	Swanson Superior Forest Products Inc
Charles & Reida Kimmel	Craig Tupper
Lane County Land Management	Governor's Forest Planning Team
Carol Logan, Kalapooya Sacred Circle Alliance	Jan Wroncy
Oregon Dept of Fish & Wildlife	Ann Mathews
Oregon Dept of Forestry	American Lands Alliance
Oregon Natural Resources Council	Kris and John Ward
The Pacific Rivers Council	Sondra Zemansky
John Poynter	Robert P Davison
Leroy Pruitt	U of O Library
Roseburg Forest Products	

VI. REFERENCES

USDA, Forest Service and USDI, Bureau of Land Management. February 1994. *Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement on Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and Old-Growth Forest Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl*. (NSO FEIS)

USDA, Forest Service and USDI, Bureau of Land Management. April 1994. *Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl*. (NSO ROD)

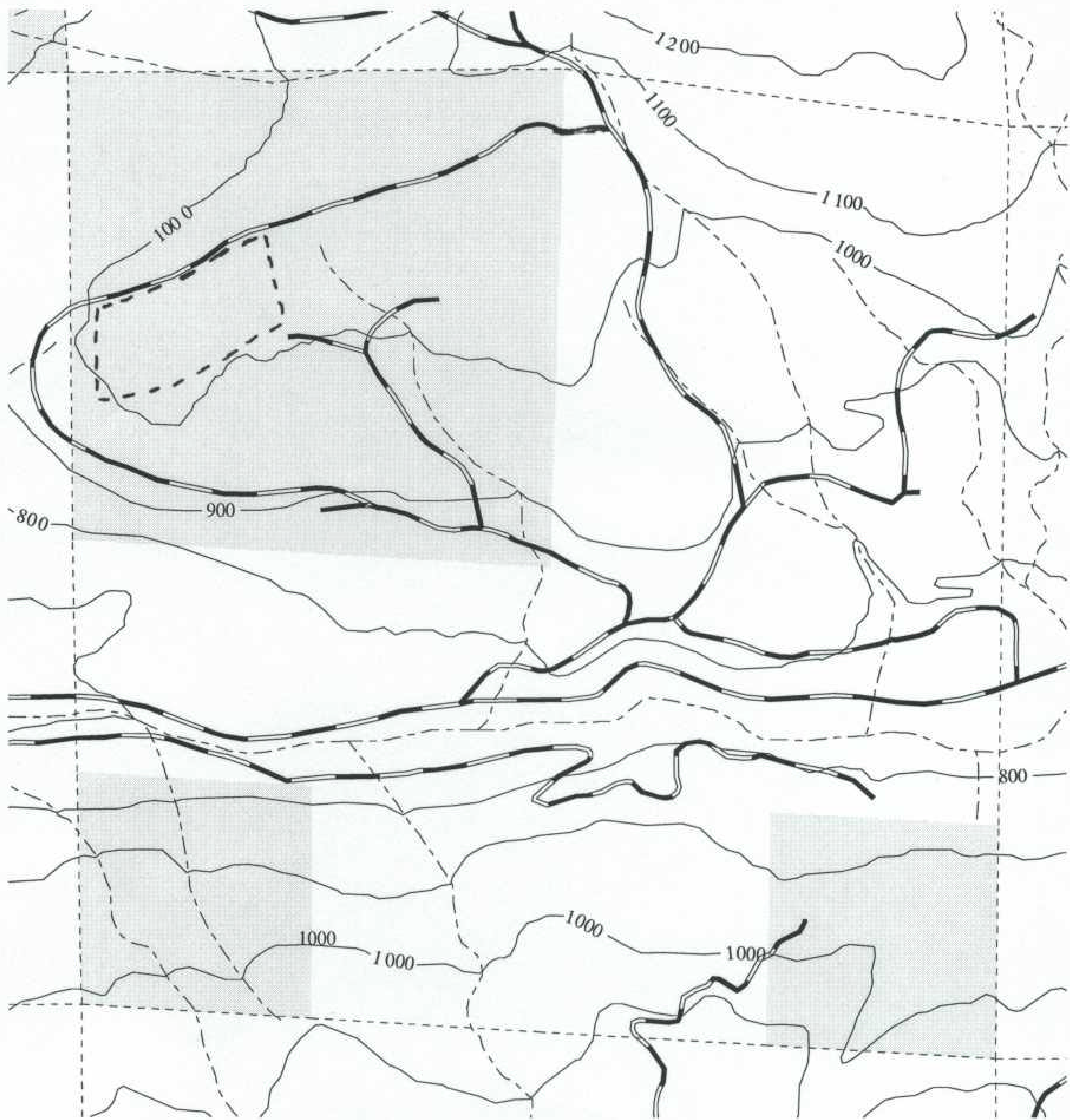
USDI, Bureau of Land Management. December 1987. *An Updated Tree Improvement Plan For Western Oregon, 1965-1987*.

USDI, Bureau of Land Management. September 1994. *Eugene District 1994 Tree Improvement Plan*.

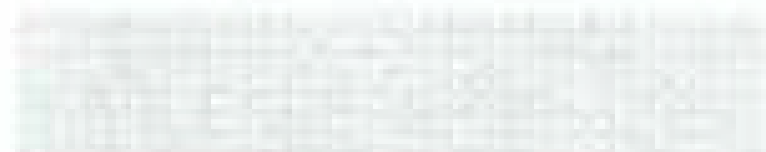
USDI, Bureau of Land Management. November 1994. *Eugene District Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement*. Eugene, Oregon: Eugene District Office. (RMP EIS)

USDI, Bureau of Land Management. June 1995. *Eugene District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan*. (RMP ROD)

USDI, Bureau of Land Management, Eugene District. May 1995. *Mohawk/McGowan Watershed Analysis*.



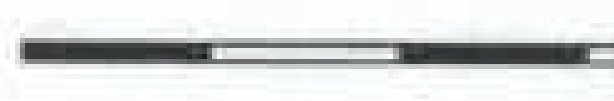
PROJECT AREA



BLM



Streams



Roads



Railroads

T.16S, R.01W. Sec. 11

Contour Interval: 100 Ft

Scale 1:12000

1000 0 1000 2000

Feet



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
EUGENE DISTRICT**

**PRELIMINARY FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
Wendling Progeny Test Site Establishment - EA OR 090-EA-00-12**

The Bureau of Land Management, Eugene District has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) and analyzed a Proposed Action to establish a 14-acre progeny test site. The Wendling Progeny Test Site would be established on a portion of a regeneration harvest area located in Section 11, Township 16 South, Range 1 West, Willamette Meridian, Lane County, Oregon. The Proposed Action is located in the General Forest Management Area Land Use Allocation and would be implemented in fiscal years 2000 and 2001. The Proposed Action would be done in accordance with the Standards and Guidelines of the Record of Decision for the Northwest Forest Plan.

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to establish a progeny test site as part of a cooperative tree improvement program for the Northern Oregon Cascades. The test site is one of six sites being established under a cooperative tree improvement agreement between Federal and State agencies, and private companies. The proposed progeny test site would be site prepared with an excavator in summer 2000. Woody vegetation would be uprooted to reduce competition and to facilitate test site layout and tree planting. A fence would be constructed in fall 2000, to protect the test seedlings from big game browse damage. The planting spots for the test seedlings are laid out on a square grid and 1 year-old test seedlings would be planted in designated spots. Eight acres would be planted in winter 2000/01, and the remaining 6 acres would be planted in winter 2002/03. The site would have regular vegetation maintenance treatments in years 1 to 10 to control competing vegetation and maintain uniform growing conditions. The environmental conditions on the site are maintained as uniform as possible so the genetic differences between the trees are expressed and can be measured. Growth measurements would be collected periodically.

The design features of the Proposed Action and alternatives are described in the attached Wendling Progeny Tests Site Establishment Environmental Assessment (OR090-EA-00-12). Anticipated impacts to the environment would not be significant. The Proposed Action is in conformance with the *Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl* (April 1994), and the *Eugene District Resource Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement* (June 1995).

The anticipated environmental effects contained in the EA are based on research, professional judgement, and experience of the Eugene District Resources Staff. No significant adverse impacts are expected to: (1) Threatened or Endangered species, (2) Flood plains or Wetland/Riparian areas, (3) Wilderness Values, (4) Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, (5) Cultural Resources, (6) Prime or Unique Farmland, (7) Wild and Scenic Rivers, (8) Air Quality, (9) Native American Religious Concerns, (10) Hazardous or Solid Wastes, (11) Environmental Justice, and (12) Water Quality.

DETERMINATION

On the basis of the information contained in the EA (OR 090-00-12), and all other information available to me, it is my determination that implementation of the Proposed Action or alternatives do not constitute a major Federal action affecting the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement or a supplement to the existing environmental impact statement is unnecessary and would not be prepared.

Emily Rice, Field Manager
McKenzie Resource Area

Date